pletely ignored a bevy of college beauties who from the grand stand above were throwing flowers and ribbons down to him.

"Now, isn't it a measly shame for Mr. Portland to do us that way, after all we have done for him?" complained Chappie Number One.

"Yes, but that is the way with heroes," replied Number Two, feeling in his pockets for papers and tobacco. "Here, smoke up, Kiddo!"

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# DON ESTEVAN'S HONOR.*

By Eleanor M. Ingram.

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**It was held in keeping by a viking of the South and by another whom he brought over the sea.**

### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

ESTEVAN DE LUCENA, cousin of Luis de Lucena, ruler of the island kingdom of Rocaverde, is left in command by the latter. Treason is discovered, but only one of the plotters, Gonsalvo by name, is apprehended. The ships come in, and Luis is informed of the matter by Estevan. That night Estevan is entrapped by one Mirando in a room where are assembled all the other conspirators, and is told of a dastardly plot to kill his cousin. Realizing the futility of resistance, he promises, on condition that Luis's life be spared, to shield the officers, who have had enough of plotting, and to release Gonsalvo. Luis, in anger, orders him into exile in the Quinta, on the other side of the island. Estevan's sister, Arria, lately returned from a convent, pleads in vain to go to him; Luis, unable to bear with the situation, puts to sea again.

A strange ship comes in, and from it lands a beautiful girl, Floria Mendez y del Carpio, whose father, a Castilian noble, has gone on an expedition with Don Luis, sending her to Rocaverde until his return. Floria and Arria stray by chance into Estevan's old rooms, and are there discovered by Mirando. Juan Perez, a little boy of the village, tells Floria a great deal about this hero, Don Estevan, awakening her interest. Lucena returns, and one day Arria comes upon him as he is kissing Floria's hand. She cannot hide the fact that she cares, and the viking of the South folds her in a rapt embrace. But she refuses to marry him until he shall have set Estevan free, and this he will not do. The ships set sail again.

With Lucena's permission, Floria has gone to stay with the maiden sisters of Ruy de la Vega, in the vicinity of the Quinta. She is lost in the forest, and meets Estevan. Later, she encounters his faithful servant, Leone Valdi. Pedro Mirando is seen by Juan Perez as he is going to the forest. Juan tells Floria, who receives a visit from Arria. Seeing that Estevan will not speak, Floria bravely declares her love for him. The lovers part, not knowing what of joy and sorrow the future holds for both.

Mirando comes again to see Estevan; hot words are exchanged, and in the presence of Floria, who happens by, a duel is fought. Estevan's dog, Taric, springs at Mirando and hurls him over the cliff. Estevan, wounded, is carried to the Quinta by Leone Valdi. The ships come in, and Lucena makes Arria marry him by sheer force of will. They go to save Estevan from the death which threatens.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### LUCENA'S WEAKNESS.

THE great hall was very still as Lucena and Arria came down the wide stairs—the stairs up which the Lady Rosamond used to toil, with the two golden-haired children at her side. The rumor of what was passing in Doña Soledad's rooms had spread rapidly through the building, and there was not one of those who rose at the master's approach who did not know that the girl beside him was now doubly a Lucena.

Arria walked in regal indifference to the many curious eyes that were bent upon her. She did not even draw closer

the sheltering folds of lace that draped her small head; her hand, in its miniature gauntlet of perfumed leather, was steadier than the arm on which it rested.

At the foot of the stairs Lucena paused, his glance traveling deliberately over the waiting hall. Ruy de la Vega moved forward expectantly, but stopped as Miguel Faria received the gesture of summons.

Lucena's clear directions were soon given, and those who overheard listened with dawning consciousness of a mistake made. Not until he had finished speaking did Lucena look fully at his former governor, with that concentrated and blighting intensity of wrath which no dark eyes ever attain.

"When I return, we shall have much to discuss, De la Vega. And pray reflect that, if I desired my cousin to die, I stood in no need of your assistance."

Arria's faint, cold smile gleamed across her face as they passed on; she had predicted this to Don Ruy, and had been overruled.

The order for horses had been hurriedly obeyed. An attendant led up Arria's mount as they appeared; but Lucena's superb bay stood as he had left it on his arrival, with Bernardo d'Allariz still at its head. The young officer lifted eyes at once confident and apologetic to his chief's questioning gaze.

"My lord, I kept Alado here," he explained. "I knew—I thought he might be needed in haste."

Lucena surveyed him calmly.

"Very well," he answered. "You may come with us, Don Bernardo."

Arria comprehended — as Bernardo could not—that Lucena would never forget the one man in Rocaverde who had not doubted his rescue of Estevan, and a sudden fear seized her. When he set her in the saddle, she detained him.

"Luís, I have thought so long of Estevan as my disgrace and the bar between us two, that I—have grown cruel. You were right; I never knew him as you did. But I do care, Luís."

The gray eyes and the violet met; and, as once in Doña Soledad's garden, the veils fell apart. Looking, Arria saw a grief which even she could never heal, a sorrow unspeakable. Lucena laid his hand on hers, and in the bond thus knit between them was their true marriage.

Alone except for the serious Bernardo, they wound silently up the tortuous ascent. The echoes of the glad and excited village were left behind; the breath of pines stole down the glaring road to meet them. And ever before Lucena went the solitary, unreturning figure which had traveled that way—so many months ago.

On the summit, Lucena stopped before the De la Vega house and dismounted.

"You are going in there?" asked Arria. Involuntarily she looked up at the rose-framed window. It was empty.

"I am going to get Doña Floria," he replied. "She has the right to go with us."

Señora Paz came out at the sound of the horses, and stared in tremulous astonishment as she found Lucena before her.

"*Señora,* I have come for Doña Floria," he said briefly.

"My lord, she has watched for you day and night," answered the old lady, with regret. "But, half an hour ago, little Juan Perez came to her, and they went to the forest together. I am sorry—"

Lucena went back to Arria's side.

"She has gone to the Quinta," he stated.

Arria started and paled.

"Already! She told me that Padre Jacinto had promised to send for her if Estevan grew worse. Luís, you are not angry with her? She did not know—she would credit no wrong of him!"

He lifted to her a face that was colorless even under the tropic sun.

"Never tell her otherwise! I wish that he had deceived me, also—that he had let me hang Gomez and never know the truth!"

No one save his wife could have drawn that confession of weakness from Luís de Lucena; even for her, it was not meet to reply. He turned away immediately and they went on.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

"I COULD NOT FIND YOU, FLORIA."

THE long afternoon shadows were falling when they reached the Quinta;

in the gorge, the rising tide moaned and chafed. The dark, neglected building was very quiet as they dismounted before the moss-grown steps—so quiet that Don Bernardo received the reins without venturing a question as to the disposition of the tired animals.

Lucena paused for an instant at the foot of the entrance flight and looked up, as though expecting to meet some familiar welcome. He shuddered slightly and continued the ascent. To Arria, the place was quite unknown; Lucena's description, given in that distant sunset, came vaguely back to her. Different, indeed, was this somber desolation from the brilliant, animated castle.

The entrance-hall ran all across the building, and opened both to the north and south. As they passed in, some one arose from a seat and came forward, stopping abruptly at sight of them.

"You, my son!" exclaimed Padre Jacinto. "I did not expect—"

"Why not?" demanded Lucena harshly. "Where should I be, if not here?"

The other shook his head deprecatingly.

"My son, I did not know that the ships were in. I wish it had pleased God to bring you here an hour ago."

Arria gave a faint cry.

"He is dead?" asked Lucena, with a self-control that brought physical pain as its price.

"No, no!" corrected Padre Jacinto hastily. "Not—" He glanced at Arria, and left the phrase unfinished. "I meant not that, my son; but—he was delirious, then. If you could have been there it might have changed much."

"He asked for me?"

The old man sighed.

"He thinks little of any one else. But now, he is unconscious."

The door at the opposite end of the hall swung back.

"*Animo, señorita!*" said a boyish voice, trembling with excitement and sympathy. "You will rest a moment—only a moment!"

"Not yet, not here, Juanito," came in the soft Castilian accents which had lingered in Lucena's memory as a spoken gladness, the ripple of a sunny brook.

Juan held open the door, seeing nothing save the girl, who followed wearily. The others made no movement, but Floria looked across and saw Lucena's tall and stately figure as he stood in the light cast through the window.

"*Señor!*" she cried. "*Señor!*" she held out her hands to him like a tired child.

Lucena sprang forward and took the little hands gently in his, unable for a moment to answer. The great, dark eyes met his—not with Arria's fearless equality, but in all trustfulness and hope.

"You will save him now," she said. "*Señor,* it was so long before you came!"

Lucena drew a quick breath, and his level brows contracted; as Estevan had once surrendered to Floria, so now did Luís.

"If I can save him yet, he shall be free. Ask his life of the Master, Doña Floria; if he recovers, he may take you to what land he will. And what has passed no Rocaverdean shall repeat, while I live."

Only Arria knew the cost of that answer; only Lucena understood the movement which brought her a step toward him, as impulsively as Floria herself would have come.

Padre Jacinto looked from one to the other, and laid his hand on a door.

"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" he quoted gravely as he opened the door.

The room they entered was large, and furnished with a faded magnificence more pathetic than any poverty. No one had lived in the Quinta since Estevan's father had gone down in a sublimely vain attempt to rescue the last lord of Rocaverde; even before that time the brothers had chosen to be together in the castle.

Here the Orient had not penetrated; the severe carved oak, the somber tapestried hangings, the gray stone, all breathed of a half monastic Spain. Contrasted with the glowing color and rich warmth of the violet room at the castle, the effect was inexpressibly dreary.

They looked first to the great bed, with its dark draperies. Lucena averted his gaze at once, shrinking slightly as his heart went out to the friend, albeit most keenly conscious of the treachery.

But Floria flashed noiselessly across the room and sank down by the bed, laying her cheek against the clenched hand that drooped beside the fine patrician hand whose white wrist was crossed by a scarlet line, sign visible of those forgotten days in Fez.

From the shadow of the lower end, Leone Valdi rose and went to Lucena.

"Come, my lord!" he urged, his sunken features feverishly and unnaturally illuminated. "Come, look at him! He is quiet enough now; a little while ago his words came fast, and you would not have liked to hear, but he is quiet now. Come, my lord! You remember him as he was months ago—*El Sonriente.*"

He put his hand on Lucena's arm, and the noble yielded to the pressure, too absorbed for petty resentment of a familiarity without precedent. But when he stood at his cousin's side there rose in his eyes something which momentarily silenced even Valdi. Leaning forward, he studied the calm face intently and eagerly.

In the stupor which held him, Estevan was defended neither by pride nor reserve; and every line of pain or endurance, every shadow of self-repression, every restraint set by a habit of thought, was evident in the grave repose that followed delirium. The characters graven on his face by the ordeal of the last few months were there for Lucena to read; watching him, Floria saw the coming of the same perplexity and vague doubt which she had felt on the day of the first meeting in the forest.

Valdi saw it, also, from the position he had taken up beside Floria. He smiled in bitter satisfaction.

"My lord is content? I remember, long ago, when Don Estevan and his cousin quarreled the last time, how he flung himself from the castle in rage and defiance, riding over here to his own house. A fair-haired boy he was then, and the lord of Rocaverde himself a youth not yet nineteen. You came after him that same day, my lord; do you recall how he met you on the steps and ran into your arms, while you both laughed with wet eyes?"

"Leone!" murmured Floria, in reproachful entreaty.

If Lucena heard, he made no sign; when at last he spoke, it was without changing his steady gaze.

"I should like him to know," he said in subdued tones which came with curious softness after Valdi's thin, harsh voice. "If he recovers consciousness, I should like him to know that I pardoned what was done. If he remembers, it might make it easier—"

Floria raised her head proudly.

"Does he look as though he required that, *señor?*" she asked.

"Doña Floria?"

She rested her cheek again on the drooping hand.

"It may be because I am a woman, *señor,* and dull. But I see in his face no shame or guilt which demands forgiveness. There has been a mistake; I knew it the first time I heard him speak your name, *señor.*"

Lucena's gray eyes flashed into fire.

"He never denied the truth!" he exclaimed passionately. "Doña Floria, he practically confessed!"

"You were ready to believe, my lord!" cried Valdi. "You sought not far to save him. Cousin failed cousin that day, and Don Estevan pays!"

Lucena faced him, white to the lips.

"What do you mean, Leone Valdi? What do you and this girl know?"

Padre Jacinto gently drew the trembling Arria to a seat, and turned to watch the two men.

"She knows nothing," declared the Italian, his worn frame shaken with contending excitement and caution. "She met Don Estevan, and felt him innocent. I know—what Gonsalvo could have told if they had not put him beyond recapture. I have been afraid to speak; I am afraid now, because of that oath I took which I am breaking! But he has borne it long enough! Shall no one be generous but he?"

"I cannot bid you break your oath, Leone Valdi," said Padre Jacinto agitatedly. "But I can promise to cleanse your conscience of all stain, if you do so."

"I will speak! I would now, though you could not pardon, padre!" answered Valdi, his eyes on those of Lucena, which left no doubt that the possibility of silence had passed. "My lord, I was with Don Estevan all through

the night of Gonsalvo's escape. Pedro Mirando is dead; but those live who can tell you, if they will. That evening when you took Don Estevan to your room, the castle knew well enough what he was saying to you, and unrest lay on us like a fever. Was there no guessing how fierce and sullen a tide surged and lapped about your quiet door, my lord—that you sent him out into it alone?"

The tinted lamps swaying in the warm summer wind; the fair head resting against the tawny panther-skin, whose sinister green eyes shone out beside the smiling blue ones—was this reality or clinging nightmare?

"I was an old man, not quick to see clearly what I feared; but I loved Don Estevan. And I was close enough to the ground to feel what passed unnoticed by those on the heights.

"My lord, near midnight you sent Don Estevan in search of Gomez. In the great hall he met Pedro Mirando. When they moved away together I followed. If I had gone to you, instead— But I could not know.

"When we reached Mirando's room there was no light; in the dense blackness Don Estevan hesitated for an instant, and I slipped before him across the threshold. It was one of the buttress rooms, like my own; by the door a little angle jutted out, and here I crouched down. As the watchman called twelve on the tower above, a light blazed up, and I saw Don Estevan standing alone before a circle of men. Alone, and with a silken sash where his sword should have hung—for the night was hot, and he had come from you, my lord. But he only laughed a little as he looked from one to another and back to Mirando barring the door." Leone broke off, absorbed in his own narrative and seeing only down the vistas behind.

No one spoke, but the pause stirred him and he brought his eyes back to Lucena.

"My lord, the trap had closed! Could he help himself? They told him that they dared not let you find the truth from Gonsalvo, as all knew you would next day. It was your life or theirs, unless Gonsalvo was put beyond your reach. They had arranged to assassinate you that night while you slept, keeping Don Estevan a prisoner until all was over. They proved to him their power to do it, and offered him the chance of saving you by freeing Gonsalvo. Oh, he realized well enough what it meant, my lord! I saw *El Sonriente* die there in the smoky, half-lit room!

"But Don Estevan consented. He gave his word to set Gonsalvo free—to keep their secret, at any cost to himself—to make no defense which might provoke you to researches, exacting in return that they should plot against you no more. He promised to fulfil the agreement to the intent and not to the bare word only, Mirando dictating the oath with a cunning that closed all escape. And as Don Estevan touched his lips to the ivory crucifix they gave him, his eyes met mine in the corner where I crouched.

"My lord, when I sleep each night I see again the light that rushed into his face as he comprehended that I had heard and was free—free to go to you, free to tell that story and save his more than life!

"Could I do that—even that little thing—for him? No. I saw the room turn black before me with the dread of discovery, and tried to shrink farther back into the shadow. He had looked calmly at Mirando again, when my movement brought a loose pebble rattling down from the masonry wall.

"I have been a coward, always a coward; I swore what they bade me. Don Estevan has never reproached me, but I knew—I knew! And they have watched me since; Mirando would never have let me reach you, my lord.

"Everything went wrong; every circumstance turned against Don Estevan, then and afterward. He would not let Gomez suffer as they urged; he never saw you alone, my lord, or he might have made some poor defense. That morning in the great hall, Pedro Mirando stood behind you, watching Don Estevan, with ready fingers on the hilt of his stiletto. My lord, my lord—you believe me?"

"Believe?" said Lucena. "I think I never believed that other. There is no punishment for what I have done, and no forgiveness!" He turned, and hid

his forehead against the dark draperies of the canopy.

In the hush Padre Jacinto came forward, his kindly face full of pity.

"My son, I give no names, I accuse no one; but what Leone Valdi has told is true. I learned it in the confessional, on the morning of Don Estevan's trial. Since Pedro Mirando is dead—God pardon him!—I may say so much. And though Don Estevan kept his word to them, they failed in theirs to him. I tried to warn you one evening, my son, but you misunderstood me."

Silence succeeded. In the exhaustion of reaction Valdi leaned against a chair, still trembling from head to foot. Long before, Arria had covered her face and the tears trickled through her slim fingers.

Floria was the first to speak, her sweet voice never more gentle.

"*Señor,* will you not try to keep him with us?"

Slowly Lucena raised his head and turned to look at her.

"He has wanted you so, *señor!* I think he might live if he understood."

"I ordered the physician to follow," answered Lucena hopelessly. "But—"

He leaned over the bed, leaving unspoken the thought that he deserved the penalty of Estevan's loss, since there could be none more severe.

There pressed back upon him the memory of so many impulses, sternly held in check, which, followed, might have prevented this. In that first month there had been one night when he had actually descended through the sleeping castle, resolved to go alone to the Quinta and force Estevan to look at him and speak. But in the end his overmastering pride had conquered and he had returned.

"Wake him, if you can, my lord!" said Valdi grimly. "Call him; he has often called *you.*"

Lucena, watching the still face, made an imperative gesture for silence.

Something—the excited voices, or, perhaps, that one voice so long desired—had arrived at the inner chamber where Estevan's consciousness had taken refuge. Very gradually the dark lashes unclosed and the violet eyes gazed into Lucena's—dreamily at first, then with growing wonder and realization.

"Estevan—I know—at last!" said Lucena unsteadily.

Estevan regarded him tenderly.

"Leone has told us. Estevan, spare me again, and live!"

"I wanted you to know," answered Estevan, the faint, clear voice holding the familiar caress. "*Señor,* I wanted that; the rest does not matter much. The shadows—it *is* you this time, *señor?*"

Lucena laid his hand upon the other's.

I thought you came last night, and knew afterward that it was not so. *Señor,* this was not your fault—this tangle. What else could we have done, you and I?"

"You are coming back!" exclaimed Lucena with a passion almost fierce. "Estevan, we will go back—together!"

"I think I left something—out there. I cannot remember. He paused. Then the frank, boyish smile flashed up again. "After all, it was for you, *señor,* though not in the way I used to plan. Lucena for Lucena!—the old cry."

The curtaining lashes fell with the last word, or the anguish in Lucena's face might have driven back the mist fast closing in again.

"*Señor,* I will try," added Don Estevan, speaking with evident effort. "If I were not so tired— Was it last night we spent at the Gaviota's helm? No. Last night, Mirando was here. Mirando—" He lingered uncertainly over the name, then abruptly snatched his hand from Lucena's and clasped it across his eyes. "Leone!" he cried sharply. "Close the window! You hear—you hear! *Las doce, y todo es sereno!* Bid Mirando silence them—I consented long ago!"

Lucena drew back, startled and confronted with his own utter helplessness. Arria had risen, and Padre Jacinto came a step nearer, his lips moving soundlessly. But Floria sprang up and laid her hands on Estevan's shoulders.

"Estevan, Estevan!" she cried in rebellion and grief. "Have you forgotten me? There is no danger, no disgrace—only Don Luís and I! And I need you—need you, Estevan!"

The cry ran through the room, in the silver cadences of the one voice in his world which could wake no dark thoughts. Once more, the fever cleared

away and left him free. A great recollection rose in the worn face, a content infinitely great.

"Hush!" he said clearly. "I shall live. I could not find you, Floria." He drew the dark head protectingly down to his breast.

In the profound stillness that succeeded, no one ventured to move or speak. The room commenced to take on the first rosy tinges of approaching sunset; the warmer light flickered capriciously from one to another, staining Arria's cheek with color and deepening softly about Lucena.

The tinkle of little bells broke in upon the hush, increasing in loudness, until there sounded clear the pattering of hoofs on the forest soil. There was the sound of voices in the hall outside, and Don Bernardo appeared hastily at the door.

"The physician, my lord!" he announced breathlessly.

"Very well," answered Lucena. "Let him enter."

The Arab who obeyed was not less skilful for being selfish as only an Oriental can be. The furtive glance he took at Lucena, as he saluted, was sufficient to convince him that Estevan's death was not desired by his dangerous cousin. He crossed to the bed, and, after an instant's survey, bent and whispered a caution to Floria. She did not move, and deftly he put aside the waves of soft, dark hair that shadowed Estevan's serene face.

When he turned, it was to bow to Lucena, with an exaggerated humility that could not quite mask his satisfaction and relief.

"Master and lord, the honored patient is sleeping. If, when he wakes, it is to find this lady by him, all will be well. The gates of death have been unlocked, but for this time he is not to enter."

The quiver of emotion that crossed Lucena's face left it very white and tired. Looking at the two cousins, a stranger would have said that his was the trial and the long darkness. But, as he had been silent before Doña Soledad, so he was silent now.

The Arab waited a little, then spoke with even greater deference.

"If it is pleasing to my lord, there should be stillness in this room, and fewer guests. The old man could remain." He glanced at Leone Valdi, well knowing his devotion to Estevan during the exile.

Bernardo vanished from the door, where he had lingered after introducing the physician; Padre Jacinto also moved in that direction, his radiant eyes still wet.

Lucena looked long at the bed, then walked slowly to Arria.

"Come!" he said, and the word was more than a caress.

She swayed toward him. Throwing his arm about her, he led her from the room.

Not any virtue could have so bound him to her as did the knowledge that she shared in his injustice to Estevan; no one could have lived this hour with him save the one who, like him, was at fault. The brave faith which was so beautiful in Floria would have stung with intolerable reproach did his wife profess it.

As they went out, Arria glanced back; from the shelter of Estevan's clasp, Floria smiled at her with all the old, glad sweetness.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### NEW DAWN.

On the gray stone terrace, where Estevan and Mirando had once met for the young noble to receive one more proof of how completely he had forfeited the love so prized, Lucena and Arria stopped together.

The delicate pink of sky and air had become a glowing crimson; the very drops of water in the neglected fountain were transformed to liquid rubies; the victorious tide sighed contentedly through the gorge.

There was no need of speech between these two; Lucena's arm drew her a little closer as they stood by the low stone wall, and Arria yielded to the vague delight of his touch, while her dreaming eyes strayed across the forest. But presently she looked up.

"Luís, only Pedro Mirando is dead. The others are not."

Lucena smiled slightly, as he had once

smiled at Estevan in declaring his intentions toward Gonsalvo.

"The others are—not. Did you think that I had forgotten, Arria?"

"No," she answered. "I did not think that."

Their glances were quietly comprehensive. Never would those violet eyes coax Lucena into indulgence for an enemy.

Juanito, lingering near the head of the terrace, caught a glimpse of what passed, and retreated hastily. Not quickly enough, however, for Lucena saw him and made a sign of summons.

"You would speak with me, Juan Perez?" he asked, not without kindness.

The boy came nearer, his eyes afire.

"My lord, I have heard!" he explained, with incoherent impetuosity. "May I tell the village, my lord? May I tell Rosa Paredes, and that Julio Lopez, who called me traitor because I carried Doña Floria's message?. May I—" He broke off, abashed at his own daring, yet mutely urging the plea.

"Yes, to-morrow," replied Lucena. "Now, send me Don Bernardo. He rides to the castle; go with him, and at dawn tell whom you will."

Arria slipped from his arms as the delighted Juan retired; when Bernardo appeared they were standing side by side.

"Don Bernardo," said Lucena composedly; "Leone Valdi has a list of names to tell you. You will ride to the castle and carry those names to Miguel Faria, who commands there until I return, together with a letter which I shall give you. Inform Doña Soledad that I remain at the Quinta until Don Estevan and I come home."

Bernardo saluted and drew back a step, but the even voice detained him.

"You will see that the orders I send to Don Miguel are fulfilled before you return. And you will return at dawn."

The officer looked at the two confronting him, and had no doubt of what he was to witness. As he vanished, Arria laid her hand on Lucena's arm.

"Luís," she murmured, "should I have loved you if you had been less the master of Rocaverde?"

At the steps from the hall Padre Jacinto paused, surveying them with innocent benevolence. He carried a snapped chain—a chain of topazes and rosy pearls—which had slipped from Floria's neck as she sank down by Estevan's couch.

"I shall give it back to her to-morrow," he reflected.

Juan Perez had his hour next morning, notwithstanding that even Lucena's caution had not prevented the news from spreading over the whole island almost as soon as Bernardo d'Allariz arrived at the castle. Happily, Don Miguel's action had been equally prompt, and this time there were no escapes to report.

All night long the village hummed with excitement, while lights flashed busily from house to house. Though Juan claimed as dawn the first streak of color in the east, he knew that his tale had already been told and retold.

As once before he had sped up the castle road, so now he raced down it in the cool white light, head thrown back and eyes aglow

"*Hola!*" he cried, the ringing shout clear as a bugle-call. "*Hola,* village of sleepy ones! Wake, *señores!* My lord and *El Sonriente* are coming home!"

And Rocaverde awoke.

When partial quiet was restored, through very exhaustion of inquiry and exclamation, Juan contemplated the people from his elevated position on the curb of the fountain in the public square.

"*Now* will you call me that name, Julio Lopez?" he challenged loftily. "Aha! And you, Rosa Paredes, with your half-deaf Valentino, will you say *now* that my lord should long since have freed Rocaverde from Don Estevan and me?"

"I will say the last half, Juanito," came in Rosa's clear voice.

Juan posed, undisturbed, on the narrow stone rim.

"Oh, you may laugh, *señores!* I care not; I am going back to the Quinta. You may tell Padre Jacinto this time, Emilia. Francisco, I go with you on the next voyage; *El Sonriente* promised me a year ago. We will capture a Moor."

Five leagues and more from Granada
Heaves a bold bark upon the sea;
There is plenty of good red gold, ha-ha!
And a Moorish trinket—no less—
for me!

sang Díaz, in gay mockery.

"Very good, Francisco—very good!" retorted his future comrade. "But I can stay no longer listening to folly; Don Bernardo started for the Quinta an hour past. *Adios, señores!*"

"And the Castilian?" questioned a feminine voice.

The pause was eloquent; the thought of the village was a caress. But Juan had the closing word.

"When you see the Castilian again, *señores*, she will be a Lucena."

The first sunbeams fell across the tranquil sea, stealing into the Gaviota's deserted cabin and trailing luminous fingers over the tumbled cushions and the jade chessmen on their shelf; then, climbing with the sun, they reached their old playground, and kindled the violet room to a glory of lapis-lazuli and sapphire.

Over beyond the mountain, Floria was sweeping her courtly salute to the Quinta's guests, lifting a face all radiance.

"*Señor,* he is awake, and asks for you."

Arria gathered the little figure into her arms, as Lucena passed over to his cousin.

(The End.)

# A CORNER IN CABBAGES.

By Herbert LeRoy Sherman.

**ABOUT the side-partner of corned-beef, and how it took a fall out of poor Merrill.**

ALMOST in the exact geographical center of New York State, the Immortal Sculptor flung a handful of left-over mud and stone. Time, with its centuries of wind and flood, molded and creased the shapeless mass into bleak, scraggy hills, which stand to-day like an unsightly bunch of warts on the otherwise fair face of Nature.

Here slumbers Apulia.

There are no records to show who first wandered to this desolate spot, or who in desperation staked the first wigwam among the hills.

The unfortunate fact remains, however, for there is Apulia—the east half—but of that the least said the better, for it died, long years before Chicago's brindle cow kicked herself to fame through a hundred acres of smoldering ruins. It died quietly, unmourned, and left leaving the west half to keep alive the ancient name.

This was no ordinary task. But the old town was not left to battle alone. Nature contributed her mite and threw her influence into the balance, till the beam inclined, though ever so slightly, in favor of Apulia, and everybody began to raise cabbage.

In a single season Apulia was a name to be conjured with among the farmers of central New York. In one year it became the nerve, the vital force, the money producer of the community. Without cabbage the scraggy hillsides would have remained barren, and the wood-colored shanties, with their tumbled down outbuildings, would never have been displaced by the cozy homes and well-kept stables.

Cabbage contributed to the comfort of all who cultivated them, but at the same time they were making one man rich.

This was the dealer, one Cyrus Merrill, a lank, cadaverous individual, with bull-dog jaw, hawk-like features, and a mustache decidedly antagonistic to the Kaiser Wilhelm style. There had, of course, been other dealers in Apulia from time to time, but one by one they had gone till Merrill faced but one competitor, who was of such limited purse